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CHAMBER NOTES

Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce

By serving its members, the Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce actively champions economic development and the advancement of the community's quality of life.

January/February 2017

From the Director of Membership Services, Ashley DeFisher

Happy New Year! 2016 was an awesome year, but I am even more excited about what 2017 will bring for not only the Chamber, but for our members as well. I will be heading into my fifth year working for the Chamber. It's hard to believe that I have been here that long; it sure is crazy how time flies. It is just like the common saying, "time flies when you're having fun". We do just that at the Chamber. Our staff gets along great and we get a lot done, but we have fun while doing it. Yes, some days can get quite crazy and some days can feel long, but at the end of the day, I think, "this job is awesome!"



We are already in full force with planning events for 2017. As the Member Services Director, my duties are split between planning events and membership. I enjoy

both parts of my job, I love the creativeness that one encounters with event planning and love meeting new people and building relationships.

I am very proud of how much the Chamber has grown in the last couple of years, and even prouder that I am a part of the efforts in continuing to grow Alpena. I am confident that 2017 will be just as amazing as 2016, if not better.

Ashley M. DeFisher

Pictured above: Ashley DeFisher with her husband Matt and their daughter Makinzee

Looking Ahead Don't miss the flyers that came with this newsletter. You will find a whole lot of upcoming Chamber events.

CHAMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For ribbon cuttings and event details, contact the Chamber at 989.354.4181 or visit www.alpenachamber.com.

January 2017

- 4 - Ambassador meeting, 8:00 a.m.
- 5 - Government Relations meeting, 7:30 a.m.
- 10 - Economic Development Board meeting, 7:30 a.m.
- 13 - Good Morning Alpena breakfast, 7:00 a.m.
- 14 - Military Appreciation Flyer's Hockey Game, 7:00 p.m.
- 17 - Board/Ambassador/Volunteer celebration

February 2017

- 1 - Ambassador meeting, 8:00 a.m.
- 2 - Government Relations meeting, 7:30 a.m.
- 3 - Business Expo Exclusive, 5:30 p.m.
- 9 - Chamber Annual Dinner, 5:30 p.m.
- 14 - Economic Development Board meeting, 7:30 a.m.
- 28 - Chamber Board meeting, 7:30 a.m.

* register by contacting the Chamber: info@alpenachamber.com or 989.354.4181

2017 CHAMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairperson: Ryan Fairchild - Omega Electric
Past Chairperson: Luciana King - Lappan Agency
Vice Chairperson: Cindy Limback - RE/MAX New Horizons
Secretary/Treasurer: Brian VanWormer - Employment Services Inc.

Directors: Eileen Budnick - First Federal of N. Michigan; Bruce Duncan - Thunder Bay Therapy; Pat Gerow - R.S. Scott and Associates; Rose Nowak - Better Living Massage Center and Spa; Elaine Orr - Alpena Power Company; Adam Poll - City of Alpena; Shawn Shankie - Days Inn; Dylan Wallace - The Wallace Firm, P.C.



**Blue Cross
Blue Shield
Blue Care Network**
of Michigan

Nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome these organizations to the Chamber. As we continue to grow in membership we are able to accomplish more. We appreciate all of our members - both new and returning ones.

F&T Fur Harvesters
10681 Bushey Road
Alpena, MI 49707
989.727.8727

Alpena Township
4385 US 23 North
Alpena, MI 49707
989.356.4024

CBM Services, Inc.
300 Rodd St., Ste. 202
Midland, MI 48640
989.631.0104

Catholic Human Services
154 S. Ripley Blvd.
Alpena, MI 49707
989.356.6385

Bella Rose Skin Care and Wellness Center
114 E. Oldfield Street
Alpena, MI 49707
989.464.1883

Kids Fitness and Nutrition Club
2402 S. US 23
Alpena, MI 49707
989.255.8946

Join us for our largest event of the year!

2017 Annual Dinner: February 9th - "Connecting the Community"

Reservations can be made at, or by contacting, the Chamber. \$30 per person, tables of eight can be reserved. Event sponsorships are still being accepted. Contact the Chamber at any time with questions you have regarding this very popular event.

2017: What You Can Expect from Us

In one word, you can expect VALUE from us in 2017. In two words, INCREASED VALUE every year. In a whole lot more words, keep reading to learn more about what we are planning for 2017.

Although not finalized through an official vote of the Board yet, the Chamber Board did come together in December to discuss plans for 2017. A draft outline is below. This will be voted on and likely made official at the first Board meeting of 2017.

Educational Attainment/Workforce Development: Continue to work toward increasing educational attainment levels and employees preparedness for the workforce. This has developed into a very active project with many plans for the near future.

Leadership development/education: Although this was not an explicitly stated goal for 2016, we did a significant amount of work that supported this as a goal. We also have found as of recent that our members are asking for access to more educational opportunities. They want to be able to engage in the trainings but save money and time by not having to send employees all over the state for the same education/training. Educational suggestions include (but are not limited to): public speaking, generational differences in the workforce and developing leaders from within. If you have suggestions for leadership training or educational opportunities please reach out to us at any time.

Additional items:

- Continue to grow the Government Relations committee functions and success. Recommend to the committee to explore a greater role in intergovernmental relationships and introducing new elected officials to the business community.
- By the end of 2017, have a plan in place and begin implementation of the plan to fully realize and share the value of the My Sidewalk program. We see the value for this data as incredible and full of potential but need to develop a way to fully realize what we have access to.
- Specific instructions for the FLOG Fest, Christmas parade, fireworks fundraising, and board attendance were also discussed and shared. Plans for each will be carried out through the year.
- Use 2017 as a planning year to implement a name change/re-branding of the Chamber. As we become more regional, the name turns partners off. We are already much more than solely, "Alpena" and we should be branded accordingly.

We will continue, as always, to engage in continuous improvement of all of our ongoing events and services. It is our goal to provide ever-increasing value to our members.

Military Appreciation Flyer's Hockey Game

Our military support committee is hosting a military appreciation night at the January 14th Flyer's Hockey game. More information is included on an enclosed flyer. This event is not just for active and retired military but for their families, and everyone else. There will be prizes, fun, a cash bar, a very special guest to do the ceremonial puck drop just prior to the 7 p.m. game start time, a chance to win the special game jerseys through a silent auction, and much more. We are planning this event to be an extremely special and memorable night so please, plan on joining us.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Center Building in downtown Alpena was built in 1903 as the Hanover Block. Originally the home of Hawley & Fitzgerald, one of the largest department stores of its day, this unique landmark later became the home of Montgomery Ward & Company for many years. The Center Building was purchased by its current owners in 1997 and has been extensively renovated and restored as a multi-use building, providing space for office, retail and food/beverage service businesses. In this process, the phrase, "building a future by building on the past," became a guiding principle. In 2003, the site was recognized by the State Historical Preservation Office as eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Over the past 20 years, the Center Building has helped to launch many successful small businesses. The owners of these businesses share a fresh attitude, youthful energy and spirit of collaboration. They also share a vision for the future of Downtown Alpena and have been on the forefront of the revival which is now taking place. This revival can be seen in the new stores opening and existing ones being improved; in the visitors and residents shopping, eating, and strolling downtown; and in a community rediscovering one of its greatest treasures.

Visitors to the building find great options for food and beverages on the first floor, which is home to The Fresh Palate, the Nucleus Lounge and Thunder Bay Winery. The recent addition of large folding window walls across the front of the building allow an indoor dining experience with al fresco flair. The open loft atmosphere of the 3rd floor is the perfect setting for Art in the Loft, a large community arts center and gallery.

Private offices on the 2nd floor include Wenzel Bennett & Harris, PC, Attorneys and Northern Therapeutic, PLC. The lower level of the building offers a community conference room and is also the stylish, relaxed setting of Suzy Salon.

This grand building is a charming blend of history and modern technology - a perfect setting for just about any business! Visit the Center Building or www.centerbuilding.com for more information about the space and availability.

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses. For more than 100 years, MSU Extension has helped grow Michigan's economy by equipping residents with the information they need to do their jobs better, raise healthy and safe families, build communities and empower children to dream of a successful future. It is interesting to note that even before the signing of the Smith-Lever Act which created the Extension service, Alpena County was home to the very first agriculture agent in the state, Harvey G. Smith, who began assisting farmers in 1912.

Today, the local staff offer educational programming and expertise in the areas of youth development (including 4-H), agriculture and agriculture literacy, financial literacy, homeownership and foreclosure prevention, nutrition education, food and agriculture business development, and natural resources including our Great Lakes. In addition to local staff, MSU Extension educators and specialists throughout the state are available to provide assistance in other areas.

Additional services provided locally include soil testing for homeowners and farmers, pest identification for weeds and insects, plat book sales and the office is the first stop for residents needing an Alpena County soil erosion permit.



The Alpena County MSU Extension office is located in the county fairgrounds at 603 S. Eleventh Avenue and the office is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Educators are available Monday through Friday by appointment. Contact them by phone at 989.354.9870 or visit their website at <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/county/info/alpena>.

Alpena County MSU Extension receives funding from the Alpena County Youth and Recreation millage and overall support from the County of Alpena. They look forward to providing continued service to the Alpena community and beyond.